

BEYOND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE: REFLECTING THE INTERFAITH WOMEN'S DIALOGUE

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Abstract

With its diversity in ethnicity and religion, some parts of Indonesia tend to be vulnerable to conflicts. This research aims to reveal the practice of religious tolerance and the active role of interfaith women in maintaining religious tolerance through daily dialogue. It emphasizes the significant participation of interfaith women in fostering religious tolerance. This study collected data from interfaith women in the Fatubesi subdistrict area of Kupang City using interviews and observation. The results show that interfaith women in Fatubesi, especially in the Oeba traditional market, live in harmonious and peaceful relationships. They have practiced the spirit of sisterhood and friendship in their daily encounters. Even though they are rarely involved in formal dialogue, women are active in a dialogue of life through daily interactions in informal spaces. They are connected in solidarity through openness, acceptance, respect, and helping one another. Furthermore, interfaith women are active peacekeepers through their activities of sharing food and other basic needs in their neighborhoods and during their religious celebrations. Therefore, the activism of interfaith women in the Fatubesi area is a practice that goes beyond religious tolerance.

Keywords: *interfaith dialogue; women's dialogue; religious tolerance; Kupang*

Abstrak

Keragaman etnis dan agama, beberapa wilayah di Indonesia cenderung rentan terhadap konflik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap praktik toleransi beragama dan peran aktif perempuan lintas agama dalam menjaga toleransi beragama melalui dialog sehari-hari. Penelitian ini menekankan pada partisipasi perempuan lintas agama yang signifikan dalam membina toleransi beragama. Penelitian ini mengumpulkan data dari perempuan lintas agama di wilayah Kecamatan Fatubesi, Kota Kupang, dengan menggunakan metode wawancara dan observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perempuan lintas agama di Fatubesi, khususnya di pasar tradisional Oeba, hidup dalam hubungan yang rukun dan damai. Mereka telah mempraktikkan semangat persaudaraan dan persahabatan dalam pertemuan sehari-hari. Meskipun mereka jarang terlibat dalam dialog formal, para perempuan aktif dalam dialog kehidupan melalui interaksi sehari-hari di ruang-ruang informal. Mereka terhubung dalam solidaritas melalui keterbukaan, penerimaan, rasa hormat, dan saling membantu. Selain itu, perempuan lintas agama adalah penjaga perdamaian yang aktif melalui kegiatan berbagi makanan dan kebutuhan dasar lainnya di lingkungan mereka dan selama perayaan keagamaan mereka. Oleh karena itu, aktivisme perempuan lintas agama di daerah Fatubesi merupakan praktik yang melampaui toleransi beragama.

Kata Kunci: *dialog lintas agama; dialog perempuan; toleransi beragama; Kupang*

INTRODUCTION

Women are a vulnerable group in all social conflicts in different regions. Noviryani et al. (2020) researched East Java and found that women were vulnerable to social conflicts from 2016 to 2018. Research shows that the majority of women are victims of all types of conflicts, including natural resource conflicts, economic conflicts, identity disputes, political conflicts, government sector conflicts, etc. Women's vulnerability in conflict motivates efforts to prevent and resolve gender-based disputes, specifically by accommodating women's views and experiences.

When there is a conflict, women are more likely to become victims, suffering on multiple levels. The religious-based social strife in Poso, which began in 1998, has caused anguish and trauma for women. During the battle, many women and children face sexual harassment, rape, intimidation, and cruelty. During the battle, the majority of women and children resided in refugee camps, which were dangerous for them. Many women have lost their husbands, while children have lost their father figures. Women in conflict and post-conflict circumstances must struggle for the survival of their families (Gogali, 2008a).

Conflict inevitably results in damage. Surprisingly, despite the tension, Poso women are stepping up as peacemakers. Women who are victims of conflict seek to promote peace through simple actions. Poso's interfaith women are fighting for peace by restarting activities that bring them together. They began communicating and cooperating in the refugee camp in order to maintain family life continuity. After the battle ended, women were the first to come out and begin economic activity in the market. They overcame fear and trauma to establish harmony and life (Gogali, 2008).

Grassroots women's activism in Poso gave birth to the Mosintuwu Institute as a forum for developing the capacity and empowerment of women across faiths. The Mosintuwu Institute program directly addresses women's issues. The Women's Schools are a women's learning space and a space for life dialogue for Poso women (Rohmawati, 2018).

The Maluku region has also witnessed women acting as peace agents amidst conflict. The communal conflict between Muslim and Christian populations in the Ambon region and the entire province of Maluku and North Maluku in 1999-2004 caused significant pain and suffering for both communities, notably women and children. This religious-based communal conflict was tragic, resulting in injuries and deaths. The involvement of religious militant groups, both Muslim and Christian, increased the communal conflict. In response to this bloody conflict, some groups initiate peace, often known as peace provocateurs. They disseminate peace messages and narratives through various offline and online media, as well as participate in grassroots peace campaigns (Al Qurtuby, 2013).

Latuperissa's research reveals that both Muslim and Christian women took part in the peace movement. During the conflict, women were subjected to numerous forms of violence, including physical, psychological, economic, and sexual assaults. Interestingly, Muslim and Christian women did not remain mute during times of strife and hardship. They were ordinary ladies known as *mama-mama papalele* or traveling saleswomen who were willing to leave their homes and travel from Huria (Christian territory) to Porto (Muslim territory) and vice versa. Following the war in the Ambon region, these women have restored friendship bridges between the Christian and Islamic communities (Latuperissa, 2021).

In line with this, Al-Qurtuby also discussed the role of women across faiths (Muslim, Christian, and Catholic) in efforts to build religious peace after communal conflict in Ambon. They are the survivors of collective violence between Christians and Muslims in 1999-2004 in Ambon. This women's movement is active in reconciliation work, trauma healing, and post-conflict peace (Al Qurtuby, 2014).

The active role of interfaith women in building dialogue can also be seen through the activism of the Srikandi Lintas Iman (Srili) or Interfaith *Srikandi* (women warriors) community, which

actively echoes the message of peace. Amid the strengthening intolerant practices in the city of Yogyakarta, interfaith women from all walks of life are seriously carrying out ongoing dialogue and building movements for peace and religious tolerance (Wahyuningtyas et al., 2019).

Some of the previous studies above highlight the active role of women as agents of peace in post-conflict areas. Research that discusses interfaith women's dialogue at the grassroots level in non-conflict areas remains limited. For this reason, this research will specifically highlight the active role of interfaith women as peacekeepers in the Fatubesi Subdistrict area, Kupang City. The Kupang City Government has designated Fatubesi as a subdistrict of harmonious religious life. It has a population of diverse ethnicities and religions, but the people live in harmony, safety, and peace.

There are frequent interactions between Muslim and Christian groups in the Fatubesi area. This is encouraged by the presence of a traditional market, specifically the Oeba market, which serves as a meeting place for interfaith communities. In this market, Christian and Muslim female sellers trade in nearby areas. The majority of Muslim sellers came from Java; others are from Bugis, Makassar. Meanwhile, Christian sellers from Timor, Sabu, and Alor also arrived.

In connection with the intensity of encounters between Muslim and Christian women at the Oeba market, this research aims to find out the active role of interfaith women through daily dialogue and life dialogue. Particularly, how does women's activism maintain religious harmony? This research will contribute to the development of interfaith dialogue models among women. Interfaith women's meeting spaces are very effective in creating tolerance between religious communities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a phenomenological approach (Moleong, 2018). The data collection techniques used include observation and interviews. Observations were made to see the dynamic interactions between fellow sellers and between vendors and buyers, as these are the primary actors in market dynamics. Passive participant observation (Sugiyono, 2016) was chosen because the researcher acts as an observer who is not directly involved in the subject's activities, allowing them to observe the situation objectively while not influencing the natural behavior of sellers and buyers, who are the primary actors in market dynamics.

Apart from that, researchers also conducted in-depth interviews with women traders and sellers across religions at the Oeba market. Determining subjects purposefully to obtain informants who are willing to share experiences and provide in-depth information ensures that the data obtained is relevant and comprehensive in understanding the phenomenon of religious tolerance in Oeba Market, Fatubesi Village. The resource persons were 17 people, consisting of 8 Muslim women, 4 Protestant women, 1 Catholic woman, 2 Hindu women, the head of the Fatubesi sub-district, and the administrator of the Hindu community of Oebananta, Kupang.

The data for this study was analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis techniques because it allows us to justify, showcase, or review data points to identify patterns (Singh, 2021). We used thematic qualitative analysis for two reasons: (a) it provided us with a useful technique for investigating the perceptions of different research participants and highlighting similarities and differences in those perceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006); (b) it provided a useful technique to shorten the most important qualities of large data sets (King, 2004). Data analysis begins with "data reduction" using Miles & Huberman (1994), allowing the data to be linked back to the research question (Atkinson, 2002). The researcher codes the data using the "initial" and "pattern" coding proposed by Saldaña (2013). In pattern coding, the

researcher sorts all the data that has been coded initially into themes, sub-themes, and components as appropriate based on the research questions.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Practice of Beyond Tolerance: The Basis for Interfaith Encounter

Fatubesi sub-district is recognized as a village of harmony because its residents from various ethnicities and religions live in harmony and are active in maintaining religious tolerance. There are places of worship, such as churches, mosques, and temples, which are religious symbols in this area. According to the Chair of the Kupang City Religious Harmony Forum, the local interfaith harmony forum (FKUB) has declared Fatubesi a village of harmony since 2019 and plans programs such as interfaith women's seminars and dialogues, as well as sports activities involving interfaith youth. Several of the programs listed above have been inactive since the pandemic. Then, in 2023, FKUB will redesign its work program (JL, interview, 2023).

In Fatubesi, interfaith dialogue begins at an early age through an inclusive education program designed to foster tolerance among students. Adi Widya Pasraman Saraswati Hindu Elementary School in Kupang, located in the market area of Oeba, has students and teachers from various religious backgrounds: Kirsten, Catholic, Hindu and Muslim. Students receive religious instruction in accordance with their faith, taught by teachers of that faith (AAGSP, 2023). This approach not only strengthens individual religious identity but also introduces children to the values of diversity and harmony from an early age. Daily interactions and joint activities teach students to appreciate differences and live harmoniously in a plural society.

Furthermore, according to Mr. Anak Agung (Fatubesi sub-district head), the title of a village of harmony stems from the fact that the people of Fatubesi already live by values of empathy that go beyond tolerance. Interfaith communities live in harmony, not because of government programs, but because harmony has been well maintained for a long time. The Fatubesi society no longer practices tolerance but goes beyond it. The Fatubesi people no longer question the outer aspects of religion but rather focus on the inner aspects and seek equal values, namely humanity. The Fatubesi people live together in daily interactions (AAGSP, 2023)."

The Fatubesi community lives by helping each other and sharing in their daily lives. In this area, there is also a practice of local wisdom, such as the *Tu'u* (helping each other) from the Rote community and *Hange'do* (kissing through the nose as a symbol of sharing life) from the Sabu community that also strengthens the solidarity of the people of Fatubesi. The Fatubesi Village Head uses a cultural and humanist approach in his service to the community and respects religious needs and beliefs when giving remarks at religious events. Religious tolerance in Fatubesi is not just tolerance but goes beyond that with the values of acceptance, openness, empathy, and compassion. This practice of religious tolerance and harmony occurs through daily interactions in the neighborhood (AAGSP, 2023).

The Fatubesi people no longer live the values of tolerance, such as accepting the existence of others with patience for the common good. In general, in an interfaith society, religious tolerance has a central role in creating religious peace. In the name of tolerance, everyone must restrain themselves towards others, even if they are disturbed or hurt. The practice of tolerance can trap religious people in a patient

attitude that can hurt them. Even the practice of tolerance can also allow intolerant behavior from other groups. There is also a fine line between tolerance and intolerance. An attitude of tolerance that is not born from awareness of the presence of others as part of oneself can potentially give birth to an attitude of intolerance (Bowlin, 2016).

The Fatubesi people have never been forced to be tolerant and maintain harmony. In everyday life, they help each other and empathize as fellow humans. Interestingly, they no longer practice tolerance, but it goes beyond tolerance. Interfaith friendships are firm in the Fatubesi area. This can be seen in the lives of neighbors who help each other. When a family experiences grief, all residents will be involved in assisting that family. Women usually work together to prepare food. Thus, they contribute to each other to lighten each other's burdens.

According to Laukel and Gentz (2013), tolerance alone is insufficient in interreligious cooperation. Tolerance is confined to mutual respect in order to promote harmony among religious communities. Religious tolerance is exceptionally vital in a pluralistic society. However, tolerance without accepting diversity will result in a pretense-based approach to relationship building. As a result, a perspective and daily practice that goes beyond tolerance is essential, namely acceptance of one another through fluid relationships notwithstanding differences.

The practice of beyond tolerance is found among interfaith communities, especially Muslims and Christians, at Oeba market, Fatubesi. Religious identity does not become an obstacle to creating close and harmonious relationships in daily interactions. All community members from various ethnicities and religions always work together to lighten the burden on others. Interestingly, all religious communities consider others as brothers and not as strangers. Interestingly, when there are religious holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, Christmas, and Nyepi, all community members participate in committees to guard places of worship and maintain road safety. This happens because all communities have lived the values of acceptance that go beyond tolerance.

In an interview, Mrs MN, Christian, an elementary school graduate and a betel nut seller, said:

“We engage frequently, although not always. During Eid al-Fitr or fasting, Muslim friends always share meals with Christians. I notice that equality does not differentiate between religion or ethnicity and never suspects people of other religions (MN, interview, 2023).”

The practices that go beyond tolerance are found through openness to mutual learning, acceptance, solidarity, and hospitality. It can be seen through an attitude that places others as part of oneself. If so, then one will never treat the other as an object but as an equal subject. Life practices that go beyond tolerance also occur because of a correct understanding of human values. All those with different religions, ethnicities, and economic and social backgrounds can mingle into the solidarity of humanity. Even though they are intermingled, they do not abandon their respective religious identities.

The Dynamics of Interfaith Women's Dialogue in Fatubesi

The process of women's dialogue in Fatubesi, especially in Oeba Market, has its own

dynamics, as described below:

- Dialogue through Equal Interaction and Mutual Assistance

The interview results showed that despite different ethnicities and religions, the saleswomen had a positive dialogue experience. The market environment is described as a harmonious place, where mutual respect and mutual assistance are strengthened in building harmonious relationships. There is no conflict between religious communities or tribes in the region. An attitude of mutual help and tolerance is seen as important in living together, and this arises from their awareness of being social creatures who need each other.

Interviews with Muslim women initial S (28 years old, Javanese) and EE:

“We assist each other in the market. My husband and I spend our days selling basic needs at Oeba Market in Fatubesi Village. We live harmoniously with our neighbors. We are frequently assisted by our Christian neighbors when we open the shop in the morning or close it at night. We always have a spot for Christian saleswomen to leave their items at night. There has never been a conflict between diverse populations, including women from different religions or ethnicities. As an immigrant, I consider everyone to be friends, regardless of religious and ethnic differences.” (S, interview, 2023)

According to EE, the level of tolerance in Fatubesi Village is excellent. EE is an immigrant, but she is never treated as a foreigner in the community where she resides. As an immigrant, EE is aware that she must behave well in order to be treated well. “In daily life practices, interfaith communities, including women, are involved in working together if someone experiences grief” (EE, interview, 2023).

These two resource persons’ narratives and experiences demonstrate that the practice of tolerance in Fatubesi, especially Oeba Market, is excellent. All market residents are aware that different groups should be treated equally. Their identity as fellow traders are more important than their religious or ethnic identity. They treat their fellow traders as friends. Tolerance is reinforced through their daily interactions, such as helping each other open and close shops and demonstrating cooperation and mutual respect that reflect the collective values held by interfaith traders (Dhurkeim, 2011; Goffman, 2021). Social values such as cooperation, mutual acceptance, and treating others as fellow human beings play an important role in creating and maintaining religious tolerance in the market of Oeba.

- Dialogue through the Act of Sharing Life

Interfaith dialogue between women in the market occurs through mutual sharing in everyday life. Muslim women often exchange gifts with Christian sellers on holidays such as Christmas and Eid al-Fitr. They also visit and invite each other when there are celebrations. Apart from that, Muslim women also share foods and sweets with Christian neighbors on Eid and greet each other. Although there have been previous cases of intolerance, such as loud music volume when Muslims pray at the mosque, their views on religious tolerance and acceptance are very positive. The Fatubesi residents are open to Muslim immigrants and maintain good relations with residents even though they have different religions. The tradition of visiting each other, sharing food, exchanging gifts on religious holidays, and helping each other when people are in grief shows strong solidarity and cooperation (EE, interview,

2023).

Market encounters between Muslim and Christian women are characterized by mutual openness and acceptance. According to MN (Christian and Timorese), there is already interaction between women of different religions in the market, though it is not particularly intense. Interaction occurs when Muslims buy betel nuts or simply greet one another. During Eid al-Fitr, or fasting months, they frequently receive cake deliveries from Muslim women living in the market (MN, interview, 2023).

S, a Muslim and Javanese, also shared her experience through open dialogue. S has lived in Kupang for 30 years and is a garment seller. She initially sold in Solor Village but moved to Oeba Market and Fatubesi Village in 1998 due to inter-religious strife (the impact of the Maluku conflict). S has met people from many religious backgrounds. S has good relationships with fellow sellers who hold different religious beliefs. During the fasting month, S continuously distributes food, or takjil, to Christian neighbors. S, a minority resident in Kupang, has never felt uncomfortable or reluctant to interact with people of other religions. The conflict she experienced in Solor village did not cause her to feel hurt or resentment toward Christians (S, interview, 2023).

- Dialogue through Openness and Acceptance

At Oeba Market, Fatubesi Village, there is positive and inclusive interaction between female sellers representing various religions. These interactions occur both at the market and in the neighborhood, at parties and condolence events. Everyone is equal. Interfaith women often share food and enjoy eating together, except for pork. It is a form of kindness and solidarity. Even though some have experienced conflict in the past, those concerned do not generalize these negative experiences to Christian individuals.

Apart from that, Hindu women also experience intense encounters with other religious women in the neighborhood, when visiting temples, and when shopping at the market. They are also active in social and religious activities involving people of other religions, such as social services and health services (K, interview, 2023). Relations between religious communities are very safe, and the Indonesian Hindu Dharma Women (WHDI) organization is involved in strengthening harmony and mutual respect. Overall, this research shows that there are positive, inclusive, and respectful interactions between female sellers representing various religions at Oeba Market, Fatubesi sub-district.

The practice of open dialogue and acceptance of religious differences is also experienced by several other saleswomen. They have positive experiences in interacting with people of other religions in their neighborhood. Even though Hindus live side by side with neighbors of different religions, they respect and appreciate each other's religious practices. They also often share food and enjoy eating together, except for pork. Relations between religious communities are very safe, and the Indonesian Hindu Dharma Women (WHDI) organization is involved in strengthening harmony and mutual respect. Overall, this research shows that there are positive, inclusive, and respectful interactions between female sellers representing various religions at Oeba Market, Fatubesi Village.

- Open Dialogue but Maintaining Boundaries

The research results show that there are positive, inclusive, and respectful

interactions between female sellers representing various religions at Oeba Market, Fatubesi area. The female sellers at Oeba Market have various attitudes towards interactions with their neighboring sellers. Some women still maintain religious boundaries in dialogue by avoiding talking about sensitive issues. Some Christian female sellers do not have intense interaction with Muslim sellers because of language barriers. However, they coexist peacefully. Sellers generally respect each other and do not look at religious differences (Y, I, AO, interview, 2023). In general, interfaith women in Oeba Market and Fatubesi Village show an inclusive and accepting attitude in interfaith interactions, which allows for mutually life-giving dialogue.

An attitude that maintains religious boundaries in daily interactions with people of other religions is shown by S (age 29 years, Muslim, Bugis). S is reluctant to comment much on religious matters. Apart from that, he seems afraid to make comments about other religions. From the beginning of the encounter, S showed her subtle refusal, saying she was unhappy to discuss religious issues because she was concerned about economic activities (S, interview, 2023). This shows that there is awareness from interfaith women traders in the oeba market to maintain boundaries to prevent conflict. This attitude is in line with the findings of Fadly (2019), in research in Tanon, Kediri Regency, where social tolerance is upheld, but there are limits or values that are not tolerated by religious believers. This attitude reflects a deep understanding of the importance of maintaining harmony while respecting existing religious differences.

- **Interfaith Women's Dialogue to Maintain Peace**

In the context of living with religious neighbors, dialogue plays a vital role. Swidler (2014) states that dialogue must be the core of human life. In this context, dialogue helps one religious group to connect with other groups on a personal and communal basis. Swidler introduces a holistic dialogue approach, the dance of cosmic dialogue, which includes head dialogue (cognitive), heart dialogue, and hand dialogue, as well as purity dialogue for peaceful and harmonious coexistence. Swidler emphasizes that religious communities must dance the cosmic dance of dialogue to have full awareness of the presence of other religions. A holistic dialogue model is also found in the practice of interfaith dialogue between women in Oeba Market, Fatubesi Village.

Interfaith dialogue is an inclusive space where everyone, including men and women from different religious backgrounds, can join and interact with each other to build peaceful coexistence. Even though women are aware, sometimes what they need is not equivalent to the needs of men who have been given privileges from the start (Cornille, 2013). If there are women involved, they are generally elite academics who are used to formal discussion spaces. Men mostly dominate formal dialogue spaces. Even in the Kupang City FKUB management, it was found that there were only two women out of 17 administrators.

As explained by Ritzer (2014), women have a significant subjectivity of experience and a caring and protective nature. Thus, "subjectivity" influences women's dialogue in dealing with problems in everyday life. At a higher level, in a large dialogue forum, women are seen by the way they view problems and are not trapped in social construction bias. However, in reality, women who represent themselves in dialogue roles on social, cultural, and religious issues are women who can increase women's social mobility. This mobility shows the maximization of women's role in the

production process, both on a domestic scale and more broadly in the public sphere, to compete in the global market, which shows that women are capable.

Women's voices in dialogue forums are critical to be heard in order to understand women's activism or existence. Apart from that, being assessed from a subjective perspective will show society how women struggle in their lives based on their life experiences. The woman's experience is valid. In interviews with FKUB administrators, it was found that FKUB was serious about opening a space for community dialogue for women from every religion to discuss socio-religious issues surrounding women. However, FKUB itself is aware that until now, there has been no special dialogue space for interfaith women in Kupang. Of course, the dialogue space is designed to bring together women from various religious backgrounds to get to know each other and learn from one another.

In the context of the Fatubesi community, women's participation in formal dialogue spaces is very limited. Usually, interfaith women meet at the sub-district level, such as health service post (Posyandu/ Pos Pelayanan Terpadu) activities, Family Hope Programs (PKH), and other activities discussing community living together. Special meetings to discuss religion did not take place because they were not used to formally discussing religion. Women across religions meet to discuss common problems in society. This meeting could be categorized as an interfaith dialogue even though it did not specifically discuss religion. Dialogue occurs when they gather, discussing the common good in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Cornille (2013) explains that in its ideal form, dialogue involves a conversation or exchange in which participants are willing to listen and learn from each other. Ornille (2013) highlights the requirements for conducting interreligious dialogue: humility, openness, commitment, interconnection or similarity, mutual understanding, friendliness, and the possibility of growth and change. As a process, dialogue between religious communities has a significant role in shaping the perspective of each religious community toward other religions.

Interfaith women have also lived the values of dialogue introduced by Cornille (2013), in Fatubesi Village through their daily interactions in the neighborhood, and in the traditional Market. Even though these women do not have intense verbal interactions, they all have an open attitude, accept each other, and are connected in human relations. They love helping and sharing. Keberadaan mereka dalam komunitas yang beragam ini menunjukkan bahwa hubungan antaragama dapat dibangun di atas dasar empati dan saling menghargai. These values not only strengthen social bonds, but also create a harmonious and peaceful environment, where each individual feels accepted and valued. They love to help and share, creating a strong network of solidarity, which is the foundation for a better life together.

Still related to this, Hornung (2007) states that in interreligious dialogue, each partner reflects on the thoughts, hopes, and values expressed by each other as other dimensions and offers new options for moving together. Interfaith dialogue encourages its participants to expand the circle of dialogue, supporting a person's growth as a member of society. Interreligious dialogue helps each religious group to grow together after experiencing actual encounters. Through dialogue, religious groups will discover the essence of their faith through insights from other religions. Interfaith dialogue through religious institutions can create norms of mutual trust

and encourage the creation of social benefits and efficiency. Interfaith dialogue is quite effective in resolving or reducing the tension of interfaith conflicts, and it can ward off radicalism (Asrori, 2019; Ichwayudi, 2020). In addition, the establishment of dialog space as a form of building tolerance is not the end of achieving harmony or peace, but the establishment of a dimension of hospitality is also important in this discourse (Nelwan & Siregar, 2022).

From the explanation above, it is found that, generally, women carry out a dialogue of life and dialogue of action in their neighborhood. In the Fatubesi area, interfaith women celebrate diversity as an inseparable part of who they are. They all live values that go beyond tolerance. Each sees the other as a brother rather than a stranger.

In their daily activities, most women take the initiative to cross religious boundaries for the sustainability of their family. This is practiced by women sellers at Oeba Market. They come from various ethnic, regional, and religious backgrounds. Most of the sellers in the market are women. They dare to leave the private space to enter the public space for the continuity of family life. At Oeba Market, women sell vegetables, fruit, and local food from rural areas in Soe. They live far from home and live in boarding houses in the area around the market. Every day, they sell to meet their family's living needs, especially their children's educational needs. The intense pressure of patriarchal culture does not make them give up. They struggle not to be financially dependent on their husbands.

Women sellers from rural areas learn to adapt to diverse living environments. In the market neighborhood, they have to meet other women from different religions and ethnicities. Even though this situation is quite difficult for them, due to economic reasons, they have no other choice but to sell on the market. For that reason, they rarely interact with each other due to language barriers. They interact more with fellow sellers from other ethnic groups or at least those who understand their dialect. However, they still respect and appreciate each other. Interaction between local Christian women sellers and Muslim women sellers from Java and Bugis remains good. Even though there is a language barrier, especially with sellers from Java, they still greet each other, smile, accept each other, and act friendly towards each other.

Women's encounters with other religious groups are always limited to informal spaces such as markets and family gatherings. In their daily lives, women usually take part in actual encounters with other groups and even foreign groups to protect and defend their family lives. Women dare to move and cross religious, ethnic, cultural, and national boundaries when it comes to the existence of their family. They bridge all fears and distrust through the activities they encounter in traditional markets, hospitals, schools, rice fields, and other meeting spaces. It is noteworthy that women will break through all boundaries of fear, hurt, pain, and trauma to save their families from suffering and death.

The intensity of women's encounters in everyday life is quite significant. Their daily encounters are a place for women across religions where they can freely share experiences, problems, suffering, and struggles without certain restrictions and pressure. This can be seen through their activities with other women in fields, springs, wells, traditional markets, and traditional gatherings such as weddings, funerals, and house-building activities. Usually, women create their own space in the domestic sector by cooking, sharing food, and visiting other women who are sick, suffering, and in crisis. They also bring household logistics such as rice, sugar, coffee,

betel, and areca nuts, as well as firewood for their neighbors who are holding traditional meetings. In traditional societies, women's solidarity in inter-religious environments is solid. Usually, women stand on the front line regarding the daily needs of their families.

Interfaith women's experiences in daily dialogue must be at the heart of dialogue. In his article on interreligious peace-building, Orellana (2013) stated that women's participation in interreligious dialogue at the grassroots level is a driving force for the peace-building process. Inter-religious dialogue at the grassroots level includes cross-community dialogue aimed at encouraging reconciliation. Participants in this dialogue, including youth groups, women's groups, and other local organizations, come together across faiths to promote cross-community interaction and develop participants into agents of reconciliation. In this context, women are also part of the peace-building process through their active role in bridging communities in conflict areas.

In the Fatubesi area, especially in Oeba Market, women have played important roles as peacekeepers. These women do not discuss theological issues, but they directly practice religious teachings, namely the values of kindness and love, in actual encounters. When they met, they never questioned religious differences. They can merge into friendly relations without abandoning their respective religious identities.

Real encounters cannot occur without generosity, friendliness, compassion, courage, openness, and acceptance of other religious perspectives. At the grassroots level, women have a significant role as initiators of the peace movement through their daily activities. Women have the characteristic of communicating and connecting with other women both in domestic and public spaces. Apart from that, women always participate in all issues related to their existence as women. In the family sector, women are connected to the sustainability of their families and communities. The participation of interfaith women in dialogue on life in the Oeba market and the Fatubesi sub-district area, in general, has a significant impact on religious harmony and peace. The women connect based on human values. The encounter between women across religions at the Oeba market and in the neighborhood was very positive. They all share life, care for each other, and help each other.

CONCLUSION

Tolerance practiced by women in Oeba Market of Fatubesi has been beyond tolerance. In their daily relationships, they all live out values that go beyond tolerance through the practice of solidarity, sisterhood, and friendship. In this area, people from various religions live side by side peacefully and form friendly relationships. In the neighborhood or the market environment, religious and ethnic differences do not hinder the creation of friendly and fraternal relations. Each religious and ethnic community understands other communities as friends and not as enemies or rivals. All religious and ethnic communities in the Fatubesi area have high solidarity. When a family experiences difficulties or is grieving, all the neighbors are present to support and lighten the family's burden. Women also took part in this solidarity action.

Women's participation in interfaith dialogue is quite significant. In general, women encounter a dialogue of life and a dialogue of action. Indeed, grassroots women are rarely involved in formal interfaith dialogue, which men dominate. However, an active

role in life dialogue through daily encounters in informal spaces cannot be ignored. This was found in the activities of interfaith women at Oeba market, Fatubesi area. Even though verbal interactions in the market environment are limited, the women still connect through an attitude of openness and acceptance. In the market environment, women from across religions greet each other, respect and help each other.

This study provides limited data on formal interfaith discussions and a partial representation of all religious and ethnic groups in Oeba Market, Fatubesi Village. Policy recommendations include programs that empower women and encourage their participation in formal discourse, as well as the development of more structured interfaith dialogue. Further research is expected to use a quantitative approach to measuring the impact of interfaith interactions, as well as comparative studies in various countries, to understand better the elements that determine the success of interreligious and ethnic partnerships.

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